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ABSTRACT

A study examined the involvement of organized labor in vocational and technical education at the local level in Ohio. The following types of organized labor involvement were examined: labor representation on vocational and technical advisory committees; labor representation on vocational and technical education program review committees; apprenticeship and journeyworker training; involvement with vocational student organizations; and other education-labor linkages. The shift from a production-oriented economy toward a service-oriented economy was identified as the major trend affecting the extent and nature of collaboration between organized labor and vocational-technical schools. The following factors or conditions were identified as contributing to the effectiveness of collaboration between organized labor and education: an awareness on the part of both labor and education of the tangible benefits of collaborative programs; an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect; organized, continuous, and structured two-way communication; advisory committees convened on the basis of trade area and that include representatives of labor, education, and industry; clear lines of responsibility that were drawn before collaboration began; periodic review of programs; and a mutual awareness of each other's strengths and weaknesses. A series of recommendations directed toward organized labor and vocational education practitioners was also developed. (MN)

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ORGANIZED · LABOR INVOLVEMENT

IN VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

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Ohio Council on Vocational Education - FY 87

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FOREWORD

Cooperative relationships between schools and organized labor have existed in various forms since organized labor's inception. With the growth and expansion of vocational education, a variety of programs developed between organized labor and vocational education. Perhaps the most visible cooperative relationship has been apprenticeship training.

Cooperative effort between labor and the schools is generally based on the need of one for the services of the other. Changes in intensity of cooperation have been based on the growth and decline of organized labor and the changing role of schools in Ohio and across the nation. Many of these changes are the product of economic conditions rather than a lack of desire or interest in cooperation. As industries retrench, relocate, or close, the shock wave of their action is felt by labor and the schools.

The Ohio Council on Vocational Education recognized a need for describing the nature of successful organized labor involvements with vocational and technical education and for sharing this information within the state. To meet this need, the Council commissioned a study by Dr. Raymond A. Wasil.

This report on the Wasil study is organized to give visibility to responses to such questions as: Why does organized labor get involved in vocational-technical education? What forms does this involvement take? What trends are affecting this involvement? What are the characteristics of effective collaborative programs? What factors act as facilitators and barriers to involvement? How can schools act to improve labor's involvement? Conclusions are drawn and recommendations are presented for enhancing organized labor involvement in vocational and technical programs in Ohio.

Joseph L. Davis
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was initiated with four basic purposes in mind: (1) to identify and describe existing relationships and linkages between vocational-technical education and organized labor at the local level; (2) to identify key elements in such relationships; (3) to identify ways to enhance cooperation between vocational-technical education and organized labor; and (4) to develop recommendations for the improvement of relationships between vocational-technical education and organized labor at the local level.

Types of organized labor involvement with vocational-technical education in Ohio included in the study were:

- Labor representation on vocational and technical advisory committees
- Labor representation on vocational and technical education program review committees
- Apprenticeship and journeyperson training
- Involvement with vocational student organizations
- Other education-labor linkages

The shift from a production-oriented economy toward a service-oriented economy was identified as the major trend impacting upon the extent and nature of collaboration between organized labor and vocational-technical schools.

Successful organized labor-school collaborative programs reflected the following characteristics:

- Both labor and education were aware of tangible benefits that may be realized from collaborative programs.
- An atmosphere of mutual trust and respect had been developed between labor and education.
- Two-way communication was organized, continuous, and structured.
- Advisory committees were convened on the basis of the trade area and provided for representation of labor, education, and industry.
- Clear lines of responsibility were agreed upon in advance by labor and education.
- Responsibility for the organization and operation of the program was assigned to specific individuals.
- Programs were reviewed periodically.
- Education and labor were aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Facilitators and barriers to effective involvement were discussed, and basic steps were identified for local schools to follow in organizing or improving collaborative programs. Finally, conclusions were drawn and recommendations were developed for the consideration of vocational-technical educators and representatives of organized labor. It is recommended:

1. That local representatives of organized labor, industry, and school officials jointly explore the value of preparing a "passport" for each student on which would be recorded specific skills and levels of proficiency attained by the student.

2. That information on collaboration efforts between organized labor and schools in Ohio, especially the new, more innovative ones, be systematically collected at the state level.

3. That the State Department of Education (Division of Vocational and Career Education) and the Ohio Board of Regents emphasize the importance of providing for representation of organized labor on community-based vocational and technical advisory committees.

4. That local vocational educators make special efforts to provide for appropriate involvement of organized labor in activities of student vocational organizations.

5. That each vocational education planning district employ a full-time staff member to coordinate collaborative efforts between education and labor.

6. That vocational-technical educators, in conjunction with representatives of labor and industry, assess the need for various types of apprenticeship training at the local level on the basis of current and future needs.

7. That vocational-technical educators work for universal acceptance of testing students as the basis for awarding credit for both apprenticeship training and for credit toward associate degrees.

8. That a joint committee on apprenticeship be established locally in order to provide a structure and continuity for apprenticeship programs involving vocational students prior to and upon graduation. (Journeypersons and apprentices should be invited to participate in the joint committee.)

9. That smaller manufacturers be given more attention by local apprenticeship councils relative to apprenticeship, especially programs that are nontraditional or of short-term duration.

BASIS FOR LABOR'S INVOLVEMENT

Organized labor's interest and involvement in vocational and technical education did not begin with enactment of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984. Although this legislation gives visibility to the need for closer collaboration between organized labor and vocational-technical education, there is a long history of linkages between the two. The rationale for these linkages has always been, and continues to be, that there are mutual benefits to be realized through collaboration.

. . . there are mutual benefits to be realized through collaboration.

In the early days of the labor movement in the United States, unionists called for, and supported, efforts to establish universal public education. Dorothy Shields, Director, AFL-CIO Department of Education, explained the basis of this support as follows:

> The American labor movement has always been a champion of better schools. Unions and workers' parties in the early 19th century were determined that the promise of American democracy should be fulfilled in terms of equality of opportunity and the uprooting of class privileges. One of the deepest of these convictions among early unionists was that the responsibilities of a democratic society make it imperative that all citizens be educated.[1]

From the start, organized labor has played an active role in the formation of federal vocational education legislation. On the following page Shields describes the nature of labor's early involvement in vocational education legislation.

> The regular AFL Committee on Education reports during the formative years of the vocational education movement helped shape the final language of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. The AFL favored the establishment of vocational education in the public schools because such a program was a "public necessity" that should be conducted at "public expense" . . . . There should also be advisory boards with representatives from business and labor so that the schools would maintain close contact with actual working conditions.[2]

Labor's active role at the federal level has continued throughout reauthorization of vocational education acts, development of apprenticeship programs, and intro- duction of new vocational education legislation.

At the state level, organized labor representatives serve in advisory roles on state technical committees, the Ohio Council on Vocational Education, apprenticeship committees, and on numerous boards and commissions that have an interest in vocational-technical education. They do this because they are committed to the provision of quality education for workers and prospective workers.

At the local level, labor representatives serve on vocational and technical advisory councils, craft committees, and apprenticeship committees for the same reason. Another reason for organized labor's involvement with vocational and technical education at the local level is that schools often have the facilities, curricula, equipment, and teachers that are needed for apprenticeship training. One labor representative's statement perhaps best summarizes the basis for labor's involvement. Ken Edwards, Director of the Skill Improvement Department, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, stated that:

> Organized labor is ready and willing to cooperate with vocational education. The bottom line for labor concerning cooperation, however, is how such partnerships or collaboration benefits workers.[3]

Similarly, the bottom line for vocational-technical educators is the perception that such collaboration benefits schools and students.

. . . the bottom line for vocational-technical educators is . . . that such collaboration benefits schools and students.

Union representatives serving on vocational-technical advisory councils and committees provide useful information to teachers and school administrators. They help answer questions such as, "In what occupational areas is there need for training and at what levels?" Organized labor's expertise has frequently been called upon to help identify appropriate curriculum content and to provide advice on the tools, equipment, and facilities required for training programs. Representatives of organized labor may also provide timely information regarding recruitment of students, work standards, and worker qualifications.

In some cases, schools have relied on labor to help students in the transition from school-to-work and to help place students in jobs or apprenticeship programs.

THE CURRENT PICTURE

Organized labor's participation in vocational-technical education at the local level most often involves the service of labor representatives on vocational-technical advisory councils, craft committees, and program evaluation committees. Labor and schools also collaborate in apprenticeship and journeyperson training programs. Other forms of involvement include the participation of some local unions with vocational student organizations and with career education. In some instances, local unions also provide instructional materials for schools. Discussion of each of these forms of involvement follows.

Labor Representation on Vocational-Technical Advisory Committees

Organized labor in Ohio traditionally has been represented on advisory committees for vocational-technical programs that feed graduates into organized labor employment. Programs in the metal working trades and building trades have typically had the greatest number of graduates entering such employment. Also, some, but a much smaller number of, graduates from many other programs enter organized labor employment. Examples of such programs are: auto and diesel mechanic, drafting, and refrigeration and air conditioning.

Currently, the membership of some vocational-technical advisory committees includes representation of only the management level of labor; however, input from journeypersons and apprentices may be equally important. The Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Career Education, encourages representation of both employers and labor on local vocational advisory committees.

The extent of organized labor's participation in advisory committees often has fallen short of the desires of educators and labor leaders. Shields noted that concern for the level of labor participation in advisory committees has persisted for some time. She said:

> Labor's call for organizational input into vocational education programming through participation in advisory committees has been continuous and persistent. There have been problems, however, in implementing this policy because it did not always measure up to labor's expectations. The AFL frequently called on its affiliates to participate in local advisory committees. An agreement between the AFL and the U.S. Office of Education in 1942 called for vocational education programs to be established on the basis of actual need and only on the advice and counsel of a representative advisory committee. Though all units of labor were requested to assist in developing such advisory committees, labor did not always participate. The AFL stressed in its reports labor's responsibilities and obligations in response to the sometimes disappointing participation of its affiliates in these advisory committees.[4]

During this study, both labor and employers recommended that individuals in the experienced "journeyperson" status be invited to serve on advisory committees. In some trades, it is difficult to get journeypersons to participate on such committees because of the unusual or long hours they work, or because their employment is seasonal or takes them out of town.

Some of these obstacles can be overcome by using more flexible approaches in both organizing the advisory committees and scheduling meetings. Meetings can be scheduled at different times of the week and at different times of the year. For example, breakfast meetings can be held on weekends, or a retreat could be used. Sending information on items to be discussed well in advance of a meeting and conducting short, well organized meetings are approaches that have been received favorably.

Labor representatives, like those of business and industry, want assurance that their expertise is being utilized and that their time is being spent productively. Carefully structured meetings that respect the interests and limited time of the committee members are normally well regarded and well attended.

Labor representatives . . . want assurance that their expertise is being utilized . . . .

Labor at the state and local level has been willing to support vocational-technical education in a variety of ways; however, representatives of labor feel they should be asked to participate and that education should do more to tell the labor story.

Information about the needs of both labor and employer can have a positive impact on vocational-technical programming and continue to generate support for vocational-technical education.

Labor Representation on Vocational-Technical Program Evaluation Committees

Each year the Ohio Division of Vocational and Career Education uses the PRIDE (Program Review for Improvement, Development, and Expansion in Vocational Education) process to evaluate approximately one-fifth of Ohio's vocational programs. During the 1986-87 school year, 1,262 vocational programs were evaluated in 20 Vocational Education Planning Districts.[5] For each program evaluated, a review committee of at least seven members is chosen to represent local interests in that occupational area. It is generally recommended that at least one of the review committee members represent unions, associations, or related employee groups.

Thus, of the 8,415 local citizens who served on PRIDE committees in 1986-87, it is estimated that over 1,000 represented employee groups, many of whom were drawn from organized labor. Such involvement at the local level is repeated annually for approximately 20% of all of Ohio's state-approved vocational and technical programs.

Apprenticeship and Journeyperson Training

Organized labor is involved with vocational-technical education in a number of ways relative to apprenticeship training and becomes involved with the schools to some extent in the provision of training for journeypersons.

Traditional apprenticeship training involvement. An apprenticeable occupation, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, is a skilled trade that possesses the following characteristics:

- It is customarily learned in a practical way through a systematic program of supervised on-the-job training.
- It is clearly identified and commonly recognized throughout an industry.
- It involves manual, mechanical, or technical skills and knowledge that require a minimum of 2,000 hours of on-the-job experience.
- It requires related instruction to supplement the on-the-job training; such instruction may be given in a classroom or through correspondence courses, self-study, or some other means of approved instruction.[6]

It is the related instruction requirement that has been the basis for vocational-technical education involvement in apprenticeship training for many years. In Ohio, such involvement ranges from the formalized and structured School-to-Apprenticeship programs in some districts to no involvement in other districts. An in-between approach is represented by those districts where the only involvement is the use of school facilities for apprenticeship and journeyperson programs.

The degree of cooperation between schools and labor varies across the state depending upon whether the area is rural or urban and the community is a town or city. Other important factors include the state of the economy and the history of past collaboration efforts. Even cities like Toledo and Youngstown are not comparable. Toledo has a dynamic, diversified, and growing economy; Youngstown is still suffering from the closing of steel mills. In areas of the state where union housing construction has declined, there is less reliance on vocational education. In such areas, apprenticeship programs may be discontinued for indefinite periods. Labor's lack of need for vocational education support often has led to a decline in labor-education contacts.

As of December 20, 1986, there were 11,361 apprentices registered with the Ohio State Apprenticeship Council.[7] Year-end reports of the Division of Vocational and Career Education showed that 6,331 adults were enrolled in apprenticeship programs that were partially supported by Department of Education funds during 1985-86.[8] Thus, approximately 56% of all of Ohio's apprentices were receiving related instruction in the schools. Thirty-nine secondary schools and three community colleges or technical institutes provided the related instruction for these apprentices.[9] Incomplete results of an informal study found that at least nine additional postsecondary institutions were providing classes related to apprenticeship programs.[10]

Thirty-nine secondary schools and three community colleges or technical institutes provided the related instruction ....

It should be recognized that some apprentices are working for non-union companies. Although the number is relatively small, the schools involved in their related instruction would not necessarily be involved with organized labor.

In some locals, training materials are constantly updated to reflect technological change.

A recent study of Union Building and Trades Crafts locals in Ohio found that 43% of these unions use vocational, community college, or high schools in some capacity to help with their training.[11]

Union locals have their own criteria for apprenticeship training programs. In some cases, a local will use in-class training materials supplied by its national affiliate. In such cases, there is a natural reluctance to allow materials to be shared with anyone outside the union. There is a concern that materials would be used to train nonunion labor. In other cases, locals have used vocational-technical education facilities, staff, and materials for the classroom portion of apprenticeship training programs successfully. In some locals, training materials are constantly updated to reflect technological change; in others, in-class training consists of only basic courses, and apprentices learn new technologies on the job.

Apprenticeship credits for vocational-technical training. Some local unions have used a credit-by-test process in the past to grant up to two years of apprenticeship credit to vocational students who pass the test. A representative of one local union observed that more credit was given when "times were good and we needed people."

Credit for vocational training thus ranges from 0-2 years. Factors such as grades in school, instructor recommendations, and working relationships with the vocational school determine whether credit is given. The higher the degree of respect for the vocational instructors and the program and the better the working relationship between the school and the local, the more consideration is received by the vocational student.

School-to-apprenticeship programs. Formal school-to-apprenticeship programs exist in nine Ohio school districts.[12] These programs are designed to bridge the gap between local vocational school programs and apprenticeship in the industry-labor complex. They may include any apprenticeship other than those in the building and construction trades. These programs require cooperative effort on the part of the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training; the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Career Education; the Ohio Apprenticeship Council; and a local school district. The programs are designed so that vocational students spend four hours per day in their final year of vocational training in a formal, registered apprenticeship program. Those students who successfully complete the requirements of the program receive credit for vocational education and also receive credit toward their apprenticeship requirements.

These programs are designed to bridge the gap between local vocational school programs and apprenticeship . . . .

Students who are 16 years old and over are selected for the school-to-apprenticeship program on the basis of grades, ability, and the vocational instructor's recommendation. Each program is well organized and structured according to a manual of operation. Employer agreements are developed and registered in accordance with federal and state requirements. The goal for these programs is "to effectively utilize the existing vocational system to assist students in making the transition from school to apprenticeship, thus creating an orderly transition from the learning environment to an apprenticeship program."[13]

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training lists the following 30 occupations in Ohio school-to-apprenticeship programs:

Auto Body Repairer
Auto Mechanic
Baker
Cabinetmaker
Chef
Compositor
Computer Peripheral
Cook
Diesel Mechanic
Drafter, Mechanic
Electrical Repairer
Electronics Technician
Farm Equipment Mechanic
Floral Designer
Landscape Gardener
Laundry Equipment Mechanic
Legal Secretary
Machinist
Meat Cutter
Model Cutter
Mold Maker
Motorboat Mechanic
Offset Press Operator Litho
Photographer Litho
Phototypesetter
Printer
Programmer, Business
Truck Mechanic
Tool & Die Maker
Welder

Within the nine districts with school-to-apprenticeship agreements, as of December 20, 1986, there were 302 approved sponsors (employers) with a total of 188 student apprentices.[14] These students are provided a continuity of education and work experience in making the transition from school to the work setting.

Journeyperson training. Vocational-technical education involvement in training of journeypersons is not as clear-cut as involvement in apprenticeship training. The schools are involved to some extent, however. Journeyperson needs for training often evolve from the adoption of new materials and processes in trades and crafts. Participants in technological update training, provided by vocational and technical schools, are often journeypersons who have enrolled individually or whose company or union has arranged for the training.

The survey of local Union Building and Trades crafts across Ohio found that 73% of the locals provided some type of retraining program for their journeypersons. This survey found that 23% of the members of these locals have difficulty maintaining

employment because they lack the latest skills.[15] These findings suggest that there may be greater opportunities for schools and colleges to collaborate in providing such skill training. Opportunities for increased school involvement might also extend beyond technical skill training, as the survey further found that one out of five journeypersons also needed updating in basic classes such as math and reading comprehension.[16]

Involvement with Vocational Student Organizations

Some local unions, such as the sheet metal workers, have been, and continue to be, involved with vocational student organizations such as the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA). Typical activities include:

- Helping prepare students for state and national competitive events;
- Helping set up and run local competitive events;
- Sponsoring student awards; and
- Helping sponsor student participation in national conventions and competitive events.

Labor's involvement in such activities certainly contributes toward the school's efforts to develop job skills. Benefits thus accrue to the student, labor, and vocational education. Further linkages that are established help all parties in the transition of competent individuals from school to the work force.

Other Education-Labor Linkages

The AFL-CIO has developed an abundance of instructional materials and visual aids explaining the role of labor in the American economy. Concern exists over the image

that labor has had in the past in the schools and with students. Labor leaders feel that schools are not projecting an accurate image of unionism. They feel that a mistaken image that students have of unions is reinforced by media reports that focus on the dramatic and/or unusual, such as strikes or violence.[17]

Concern exists over the image that labor has had in the past....

A new manual, Labor in the Schools: How to Do It, has been developed by the AFL-CIO to help locals work with schools to teach about organized labor. It gives examples of programs, contains sample materials, and lists instructional aids and films available for teaching about unions.

Leaders in the career education movement have shown interest in developing linkages with organized labor. In 1980, a miniconference was held to explore how organized labor might work more closely with career education.[18] Participants included vocational educators from a number of states, a representative of the U.S. Department of Education, and representatives of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the AFL-CIO, and the International Apprenticeship Trust. They discussed how a "master plan" might be developed, how schools should make initial contact with organized labor, and how to include an orientation to organized labor in the curricula of rural school districts. The latter topic was deemed relevant because many youth from rural settings move to urban areas, where organized labor is concentrated.

INFLUENTIAL TRENDS

It was stated earlier that collaboration between organized labor and vocational-technical education is based on mutual need. In trying to foster and encourage effective collaboration, it is important to recognize certain forces and trends.

Trends in the Economy

Perhaps the root force behind changing needs for involvement of organized labor with vocational-technical education is the changing economic picture in Ohio. As in other parts of the country, a major shift is occurring from a production-oriented economy toward a service-oriented economy.

Between 1979 and 1986, employment in manufacturing decreased by 286,300 (21%) in Ohio. Transportation/public utilities and construction employment has decreased by 10%. During the same seven-year period, employment in service occupations increased by 236,300 (29%) and in retail trade, by 145,700 (19%). There were also significant increases in employment in wholesale trade, in finance/insurance/real estate, and in government.[19] It is important to note that organized labor traditionally has not been as active in the service occupations, which have shown a steady increase, as it has in the production occupations, which continue to decline. As a result, the total number of employees represented by organized labor has decreased.

. . . a major shift is occurring from a production-oriented economy toward a service-oriented economy.

With the decrease in the number of jobs available for union employees has come less need for apprentices. In fact, the number of apprenticeships in Ohio has decreased more dramatically than has production employment. The need for the school's help in training apprentices has also lessened. For example, in 1979, vocational-technical education provided training for 11,428 apprentices; in 1986, only 6,331 were trained in programs partially supported by the Division of Vocational and Career Education, nearly a 44% decrease.[20]

. . . the number of apprenticeships in Ohio has decreased more dramatically than has production employment.

Economic trends are an important factor in the growth or decline of labor's collaborative efforts with vocational-technical education. The trend has been toward less interaction in areas where the economy is poor, and few, if any, apprentices are being selected from vocational programs. When journeypersons are "sitting on the bench" and work is slow, there is little motivation for labor involvement in collaborative efforts.

At first glance, it might appear that there should be reduced need for involvement of organized labor in vocational-technical education due to the changing economy. However, the exact opposite is probably true. The schools need the input of organized labor to help understand changes taking place in the labor force and to prepare for the changing needs of workers. Although the number of new workers in some segments of the economy is decreasing, the application of new technology to existing jobs creates new opportunities for schools to participate in updating workers in various technologies.

At the same time, organized labor needs vocational-technical education, to help retrain and prepare workers in anticipation of plant closings and layoffs. Union members also

need training in present day economics, customer relations, and changing needs of the labor market. Both labor and education should continuously stay abreast of emerging needs and opportunities for collaboration resulting from the great expansion of employment in the service sector of the economy.

Trends in Apprenticeship Programs

A number of trends are developing in apprenticeship programs in Ohio that affect the extent and nature of organized labor involvement in vocational-technical education. These trends relate to the selection of apprentices, the duration of training, type of training, and the educational level at which training is provided.

With the exception of traditional construction trades, there is a trend toward shorter apprenticeship programs. Some of these programs are industry specific. An industry will work with a vocational or technical school to provide specific types of training for its employees. These employees must also serve in an apprenticeship capacity for a specified period of time, and meet certain entrance and completion requirements.

. . . more attention is being given to ability, motivation, and experiences gained through prior training.

For the past 20 years, there has been a movement away from the "father/brother-in-law" process of selecting apprentices. Because of the increasing technical requirements of the work and the training required, more attention is being given to ability, motivation, and experiences gained through prior training. Adherence to Equal Employment Opportunity requirements and elimination of upper age limits have increased participation of women,

minorities, and older individuals. For the traditional apprenticeships, apprenticeship councils are now seeking older apprentices, women and minorities, and individuals with prior work experience, military experience, or one-to-two years of formal postsecondary education.

There is a trend away from the one-skill-only apprenticeship program. Contractors are seeking well-trained individuals who bring a number of skills to jobs. Some apprentices perceive this type of training as a buffer to layoffs. There are implications for these types of training in vocational-technical education program design.

In some nonunion apprenticeship programs that are not registered with the Ohio Apprenticeship Council, such as that of Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., construction workers are taught skills in more than one related area. For example, an individual might be trained in plumbing and electricity. Core courses are taught in such areas as blueprint reading and introduction to construction. The number of nonunion apprenticeships has also increased.

Trends in Educational Level

There is also a movement away from the use of vocational facilities for apprenticeship training. Some apprenticeship councils are using two-year colleges or training centers for a majority of their basic courses in subjects such as blueprint reading, mathematics, and communication skills. The same holds true for a number of other subjects. However, hands-on training is still provided on the job by journeypersons.

Some union locals are encouraging their apprentices to obtain two-year degrees.

The degree of skill or training required by the trade sometimes influences the choice of institution. Some union locals are encouraging their apprentices to obtain two-year degrees. This trend appears most prevalent in the more technically-oriented apprenticeships, but often is determined by the location of two-year institutions, their program offerings, their willingness to grant credits toward a degree, and the relationship between the institution and the local union. The move toward degrees is indicative of the importance now being placed by local unions, employers, and apprentices on formal degrees.

The choice of institutions to offer training is sometimes based upon perceptions held by labor leaders that may or may not reflect the reality of current local conditions.

Two-year postsecondary institutions are gaining broader acceptance as a source of instruction in basic (core) subjects and credit that may be applied toward a two-year degree. Some such institutions have new, state-of-the-art equipment and full-time staff members who coordinate and supervise apprenticeship programs and market them to industry and labor.

In one metropolitan area, a tripartite model for apprenticeship training is being developed with painstaking care. The public school provides the training facilities and equipment, while the community college works with the Joint Apprenticeship Committees in managing the delivery of the related instruction. In this type of arrangement, the potential exists for the apprentice to receive an associate degree along with the "Journey Person" card.

Vocational education is sometimes believed to be outdated by labor leaders who have not visited modern, state-of-the-art programs. It is perceived as a system using outdated equipment, lacking full-time staff to work with industry and labor, and not directing vocational students toward two-and four-year degree programs.

Still another trend is influencing the extent and nature of collaboration between organized labor and the schools. There is a growing on-the-job importance of basic skills such as mathematics, reading, and communication skills. This trend is supported by the findings of the Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Training Foundation, Inc., referred to earlier in this report. The Foundation found that 23% of their membership have difficulty maintaining employment because they lack the latest technical skills and 19.5% need classes in basic skills.[21]

There is a growing on-the-job importance of basic skills ....

Some would identify as a trend the increasing competition between secondary vocational schools and postsecondary technical schools to serve adults in the community. Others discount the idea of competition for the same clientele and maintain that each level of institution appeals to unique needs of potential clients and that, conceivably, there is more education to be provided than both can deliver.

KEY ELEMENTS IN SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS

This study examined a number of successful programs involving organized labor in vocational-technical education at the local level. Many characteristics of successful collaboration between schools and organized labor were identified as well as facilitators of, and barriers to, collaboration.

Characteristics of Successful Collaborative Programs

Successful organized labor-school collaborative programs reflected the following characteristics:

- Both labor and education were aware of tangible benefits that may be realized from collaborative programs.
- An atmosphere of mutual trust and respect had been developed between labor and education.
- Two-way communication was organized, continuous, and structured.
- Advisory committees were convened on the basis of the trade area and provided for representation of labor, education, and industry.
- Clear lines of responsibility were agreed upon in advance by labor and education.
- Responsibility for the organization and operation of the program was assigned to specific individuals.
- Programs were reviewed periodically.
- Education and labor were aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Facilitators of Labor Involvement in Vocational-Technical Education

Good economic conditions, high employment, and booming construction all foster cooperation and collaboration between schools and organized labor. These conditions increase organized labor's need for the training services the schools can offer and create a need for the qualified individuals the schools can help provide to enter the trades.

Schools may find it easier to place students in apprenticeship programs. They may find credit for vocational-technical education more readily granted toward apprenticeship requirements and generally a higher level of interest and readiness on the part of labor representatives to become involved with the schools.

Unfortunately, neither the schools nor organized labor is the major determinant of economic conditions.

Open communication and the willingness for both schools and labor to hear the positions, needs, and limitations of the other facilitate involvement. Open communication is necessary for labor and schools to explore and identify areas in which collaboration is desirable and feasible.

Open communication . . . facilitates involvement.

A willingness for schools to modify curricula to meet the changing needs of workers was identified as a facilitator of collaboration. Also, foresight in identifying emerging needs for training in view of the shifting economy becomes a facilitator to labor involvement in vocational-technical education.

Barriers to Labor Involvement in Vocational-Technical Education

Many stereotypes exist about schools and organized labor. These stereotypes cause mutual distrust. Some vocational programs were viewed as competition by some union members. For example, vocational training in construction trades was interpreted by some to mean that vocational education was preparing students to become cheap

competition for union journeypersons. Such a perception is quite broadly held. Of the 86 locals responding to the survey of the Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Training Foundation:

> 29 said the locals were hindered by the Education systems (training more people than there were jobs, lowering the living standards for the area through lower wages, training people for the nonunion sector, poor training, etc.).[22]

Conversely, some educators feel that unions are overprotective of their members' job opportunities, seeking inordinately to limit the number of persons receiving skill training.

The absence of regular communication . . . inhibits involvement.

The concept held by some labor leaders, that vocational education is "pre-apprenticeship" training only, acts as a barrier to collaboration. Vocational educators and vocational graduates often feel that knowledge and skills developed in school should be recognized and credited toward apprenticeship requirements. Cooperative efforts are further inhibited by the perpetuation of stereotypes that could be eliminated if schools were to make broader use of organized labor's educational resources.

The absence of regular communication between organized labor and vocational-technical education inhibits involvement. This study encountered examples of casual and sporadic communication and collaboration between the schools and organized labor. Contacts occurred only when there was a specific need on the part of labor, and they did not constitute long-lasting relationships. Labor councils did not always utilize the expertise of educators that was available to them free of charge. Nor was labor fully aware of the schools' programs, activities, and efforts that might be of interest to them.

Only rarely do school districts assign a full-time staff member to coordinate activities between vocational education and organized labor. Where this arrangement exists, mutually advantageous programs have been developed.

The amount of activity between vocational-technical education and labor is influenced directly by economic conditions and the availability of program money. When funds are available to support collaborative activities, such activities are more likely to occur. The absence of financial support will therefore act as a barrier to collaboration.

NEW OR IMPROVED COLLABORATION

Basic steps for schools and organized labor to follow in organizing or improving collaborative programs may be listed as follows:

- Conduct an assessment of apprenticeship and school needs. The Ohio Apprenticeship Council maintains a list of all apprenticeship programs receiving state or federal funding. Employers involved in such programs must be registered. A review of existing vocational-technical programs can be made in light of employer needs and the requirements of a specific craft.
- Identify key representatives of union locals and employers. Present to them the results of the needs assessment and request their input.
- Contact labor organizations or groups representing crafts related to vocational-technical programs.
- Organize a committee of the key persons identified.
- Involve the committee in formalizing the guidelines and requirements for mutually beneficial efforts.
- Disseminate information to all of the education, labor, and industry personnel involved.
- Publicize the program, using a planned public relations campaign.
- Set dates for evaluation sessions.
- Document and publicize positive results of collaboration and cooperation.
- Conduct a continuing assessment of the programs.

Since positive reinforcement and recognition are factors that perpetuate and expand school-labor activities, successful programs must be publicized to both the labor and educational communities. An individual must assume responsibility for insuring the proper and timely operation of activities, the organization and coordination of meetings, and the development or modification of programs. This individual may come from either labor or education. The services of this individual are indispensable to the continuity of cooperative or collaborative efforts.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Three forms of contact were used in this study. The first was a series of personal interviews with key individuals involved in or responsible for apprenticeship training at the state and local levels. These individuals represented vocational-technical education and labor organizations. The second was a series of in-depth, question-answer sessions with local educators and labor representatives in locations where collaboration was known to exist. The third was a review of documents requested from various sources.

Sites were selected for contact on the basis of their involvement in apprenticeship programs and on the level of activity evident in such programs. Care was exercised in the selection process to guarantee distribution of sites throughout the state and representation of a variety of vocational-technical delivery configurations, including large city school systems, vocational school districts, compacts, and two-year postsecondary institutions.

A formal set of questions was used to structure the interviews, and documentation of current and past involvement and activities was sought. A number of districts that reported having no form of apprenticeship involvement also were contacted later in the study.

CONCLUSIONS

The basis for involvement of organized labor in vocational-technical education is that benefits accrue to both labor and to schools and students. For example, labor views the school-to-apprenticeship program as assuring entry of properly qualified and highly motivated students into apprenticeship training that articulates the related instruction in the schools with on-the-job skill training by journeymen. Schools and students benefit through a reduction in the time that more capable students must spend in apprenticeships following graduation, reinforcement of subject matter taught in the schools, and the positive effects upon student enrollment and placement.

Organized labor involvement in vocational-technical education in Ohio takes a number of forms. The most typical forms of involvement are the service of representatives of organized labor on vocational and technical craft advisory committees and collaboration in apprenticeship training. Other forms of labor involvement include work with vocational student organizations and provision of instructional materials.

A number of trends are affecting the forms and extent of organized labor involvement in vocational-technical education in Ohio. The major trend is the shift from a production-oriented economy toward a service-oriented economy.

A number of conditions tend to characterize successful collaborative activities between organized labor and vocational-technical education. Primary among these appears to be regular, on-going, open communication. An atmosphere of trust has been developed, and tangible benefits of collaboration have been identified by both labor and education. Organized labor and vocational-technical education hold some perceptions of one another that act as barriers to effective collaboration. In spite of such barriers, there are a number of actions that vocational-technical educators can take to initiate or improve collaboration with organized labor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based upon the outcomes of this study. They are presented for the consideration of vocational-technical educators and representatives of organized labor at both the state and local levels. It is recommended:

1. That local representatives of organized labor, industry, and school officials jointly explore the value of preparing a "passport" for each student on which would be recorded specific skills and levels of proficiency attained by the student.

2. That information on collaboration efforts between organized labor and schools in Ohio, especially the new, more innovative ones, be systematically collected at the state level.

3. That the State Department of Education (Division of Vocational and Career Education) and the Ohio Board of Regents emphasize the importance of providing for representation of organized labor on community-based vocational and technical advisory committees.

4. That local vocational educators make special efforts to provide for appropriate involvement of organized labor in activities of student vocational organizations.

5. That each vocational education planning district employ a full-time staff member to coordinate collaborative efforts between education and labor.

6. That vocational-technical educators, in conjunction with representatives of labor and industry, assess the need for various types of apprenticeship training at the local level on the basis of current and future needs.

7. That vocational-technical educators work for universal acceptance of testing students as the basis for awarding credit for both apprenticeship training and for credit toward associate degrees.

8. That a joint committee on apprenticeship be established locally in order to provide a structure and continuity for apprenticeship programs involving vocational students prior to and upon graduation. (Journeypersons and apprentices should be invited to participate in the joint committee.)

9. That smaller manufacturers be given more attention by local apprenticeship councils relative to apprenticeship, especially programs that are nontraditional or of short-term duration.

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